



Notes
From informal meeting July 29, 2003
at Keck's Home
7PM

In attendance:

Gordon Sullivan
George Keck
Barb Guthneck
Jim Christiansen

This meeting was called by George as a follow up to a morning meeting of Gordon, George and Jim at Lester Skramstad's home. The meeting at the Skramstad Site (2PM as a result of an AM Skramstad/EPA meeting) was to review his in-progress cleanup issue represented the EPA, ER, TAG (at Les's 1:30 phone request to Geo.), the Home owner and his subcontractor. The issue at hand was how to resolve Skramstad's subcontractor completion of running a new water line underground into his home when LVI was encountered in the crawl space (ground soil/surface) beneath his home. In resolution, the EPA agreed to take over and complete/closeout the piping run upon Skramstad's subcontractor reaching the crawl space at foundation inner side with: (1). The EPA placing plastic sheeting in crawl space work areas as a LVI containment measure. (2). Skramstad's subcontractor maintaining the right to final inspection of the EPA's portion. (3). Skramstad's work scope agreement with the EPA to be modified accordingly. Jim had attempted to negotiate a solution with Lester but was cut off with a barrage of threats, after Jim answered that EPA "probably wouldn't" clean Lester's basement. When Gordon and George arrived, they were able to listen and negotiate a simple solution to Lester's satisfaction. Geo., Jim, Gordon, and Barb. agreed to meet later in the day (7pm) to critique/discuss this session and other concerns.

Jim said he recognized that while a clean up could be 98.7% cleaned up satisfactorily, that it would be the 1.3% problem that would keep individuals from thinking the job was satisfactory at all. He agreed that having Gordon and George from the local TAG enter the picture was the most expedient manner of satisfying this morning's and other homeowner's issues.

The overall concern was that if left to fester, these small problems, left unsolved, would give the community a sense that the EPA clean up was a failure. George said he had a concern regarding the public's recognition, education, and understanding of the apparent shift in EPA's emphasis from "remove" to "contain" to "minimization of release", their 3 year or so campaign sensitizing Libby to the perils of tremolite contaminated vermiculite, and Jim's commitment to needed PR and assistance with Sandy's Education Tiger Team.

Gordon and George brought up LATAG safety concerns for the employees of EPA contractors. They said that since EPA had stressed so strongly to the community that even a little bit of Libby type asbestos was harmful, that then seeing EPA contract workers dealing with asbestos without having protective respiratory gear, etc. was alarming and should be stopped. They felt that while some thought a little bit of

asbestos "won't kill you", that conclusive scientific evidence to back that up has not been proven. They felt this was especially true when you have workers dealing with small amounts of asbestos without protection on a daily basis, there is no long term health security for those workers. Jim agreed to talk to the contractors and have employees use protective gear. He asked in return for asking the contractor to go beyond what they consider safe for their employees, that LATAG would help him educate the community that the inevitably small amounts of asbestos will be left behind in individual properties do not constitute a major health crisis for the homeowners and that extreme respiratory precautionary measures are not necessary for very occasional contact.

Gordon and George asked Jim to increase the EPA contractor oversight of individual clean ups, citing that currently inexperienced employees are, seemingly making up the rules as they go, and no one is closely supervising and inspecting their work. Jim explained that we are going into a new long term contract period with contractors. He assured that he will increase the required level of higher level management to oversee the workers with these new contracts.

George and Gordon brought up the excellent record of the current EPA contractors in hiring local, Libby area employees. They were concerned however, that these employees are being brought onto the job inexperienced and not being trained fully for the jobs they are doing. Hence George and Gordon said that these untrained locals, are producing a lower quality of work, e.g., carpentry, electrician work, sheet rock hangers, etc. due to lack of training. They stated the EPA contractors are doing a disservice to these locals in not giving them the training they need to move ahead in the job market by having saleable skills. Again, Jim noted that the new contracting round coming up would allow contractors to spend more time and effort in training locals in saleable job skills. There was discussion how to finance the necessary training for these locals and ideas such as a graduated salary scale and training paid for by LAEDC funds could be explored. The other option Jim mentioned was bringing already experienced employees from other areas but he was urged to continue the local employment as much as possible.

Concern was expressed to Jim about the overall cost efficiency of the EPA contractors and whether they were concerned or just spending money. Again, Jim deferred to the new round of contracting when Contractors would have more competition amongst themselves to be more cost conscious.

Gordon's previous concept of Homeowner Advocate was brought up to Jim. This concept, as proposed, would pay Gordon, under the LATAG grant, to be on site of a clean up at the initial conference between the EPA contractor and homeowner to help assure the homeowner that necessary clean up would be done and to give the homeowner realistic expectations of what could and could not be done. Then Gordon would be at the final inspection as an advocate of the homeowner to help solve any problems the homeowner sees. This was looked at as a necessary step in the process to allow individual homeowners to see the clean up as a success, ensure efficiency, keep Jim out of every tiny problem that came up and help LATAG and the community know that there was a local in there on the side of the homeowner. It was asked if the LATAG grant could fund this activity and Jim said he would get the correct verbiage to George so he could amend the LATAG grant for it to happen.

Jim asked that LATAG help shelter him from the constant barrage of demands from local citizens who want him to research varying matters "now!" The problem Jim stated is that in trying to get his job done, including all the research documents necessary to go into the next phase, the constant demands of Libby residents is causing him to work through his vacation and all his spare time and he is still getting behind. George agreed that this is an area LATAG could take on, listening to problems, solving some and then prioritizing the remainder and giving to Jim in the order of precedence. He asked that Jim refer citizens to LATAG and give LATAG a chance to work through them before involving Jim.